Fruits of the Fields

222
824 jaboticaba
137 mangaba
field caju
axiua
muruci
marmelada
field araticu
pineapple

jubã
unhua
hacerácaraũ
eten-ã
quenhen-â
hera-â
bocubocu baru
iparâ

252 Daũ is the favorite food of the Mundurucu. It is prepared
137 with Pará chestnuts.

This nut is quite well known, for the province of Pará yearly exports it to Europe by the thousands of hectoliters.

It is known in Europe as the Brazil nut, and contains sixty per cent light and delicately flavored oil.

252 To prepare daũ, the Mundurucu cook the nuts, peel them, soak them, mash them, place them in a pot, cover them with leaves, and allow them to smoke for eight days. [121]

This paste undergoes a sort of fermentation and exhales a strong odor.

Then they mash it again and place it in a pan on the fire.

Thus prepared, daũ keeps for a long time.

262 They also make another kind of daũ from the same nut; once cooked and mashed, it is mixed with fish or meat.

The Mundurucu also feed on banana mush; yam mush; porridge of manioc flour mixed with assai; pataúá; bacaba; and maniqueira mush.

[272] In summertime they drink a sort of refreshing beverage made from wild beans which they call uteima.

[273] They do not appear to use alcoholic beverages or to become intoxicated.

261 They are very frugal. When game is scarce on rainy winter days, they subsist on sweet potatoes, yams, chestnuts, daũ, etc.

251 They preserve the flesh of game by smoking it slowly over the fire in the accustomed manner.

226 These communal fishing trips were usually undertaken by the people of one village but occasionally involved hundreds of people from several communities. The efficacy of this system of fishing can be attested to by the writer who took part in one such expedition in which over one hundred people from four different villages participated and approximately three tons of fish were killed. The fish were preserved by smoking, salting, and sun drying and remained edible for a period of one week to ten days. Modern timbó fishing is done in the same manner as in aboriginal times. This is also true of the gathering of wild fruit, nuts, and berries.

[251]

222

Gathering of wild vegetable products

Gathering is and was the least important subsistence activity and food source among the Mundurucú and was often done incidentally to hunting, fishing, or trips to the gardens. Among the main articles gathered were several species of palm fruit, Brazil nut, the fruit of the cajú tree (Anacardium corymbosum), wild cocoa, mangaba, and several varieties of berries.

Those wild vegetable foods found only at long distances from the village were always gathered by the men on the way home from hunting, especially if they had been unsuccessful. When the fruit trees were near the village, one man or an older boy usually went out with a party of women, the boy to climb the tree and get the fruit, the women to carry it home. Climbing was done with climbing ring, a

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

timbó parties the water is poisoned by two or three separate groups at points about 1,000 feet apart along the stream. As soon as the fish begin fleeing downstream from the group farthest upstream, a sentinel stationed a short distance downstream gives several loud shouts to the next group, signaling them to start beating the drug into the water. The fish thus have little opportunity to escape to pure water. To prevent any from making their escape, a dam made of branches set into the stream bottom is sometimes placed about a mile or two downstream from the fishing location. A space is left open until the morning of the fishing to allow fish to swim upstream during the night. This system is particularly effective to catch the *matrinchão* (*Brycon brevicaudatus* Gunther), which ascends the smaller streams every night to sleep and then returns downstream with the coming of day.

These communal fishing trips are undertaken by as many persons as can conveniently gather together; lack of canoes and the long distances between rubber-avenue dwellings limit the size of these gatherings among the contemporary campineiros. The efficacy of this system of fishing is remarkable. My wife and I took part in one such venture on the Cururú River in which more than one hundred people from four different villages participated, and approximately two tons of fish were killed. The surplus yield is preserved by smoking, salting, and sun drying, but due to the crudity of the process it remains edible for a period of only one week to ten days.

GATHERING OF WILD VEGETABLE PRODUCTS

Gathering of wild vegetables and fruits is and was the least important subsistence activity and food source in Mundurucú economic life; it is often done incidentally to hunting, fishing, or trips to the gardens. Among the main

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*241 resettled on the Maué-assu River /Maués-Guassú ?/ and in the former
[175] mission of Vila Nova da Rainha in 1800 and 1803 respectively, he says that they "... showed little inclination to prepare gardens for manioc flour." (3)

3. Monteiro Baena, 1843: 283.

Later, Martius, in his more extensive report on the Mundurukú, does not mention qualitative cultivation but refers merely to the quantitative production of the gardens, i.e., he alludes to the large volume of manioc flour produced by the Tapajós Mundurukú, but /3/ he is not familiar with, or at least does not mention, the plant varieties they cultivate, although they undoubtedly raised more than the cotton and manioc roots he mentions. He attributes the quantita-
[648] tive development to the power and warring strength of the tribe, which thus protected its gardens against the attacks, thefts, and raids frequently carried out by other tribes, especially the Mura. Martius speaks as follows: "In the arts of agriculture, the Mundurucú merely appear to be ahead when compared with the others, while /actually/ the power of the populous and warlike tribe ... makes the gardens
[161] safer, and because the somewhat dense population can no longer de-
248 pend exclusively on hunting and fishing. They plant a little cotton
●251 and a lot of manioc roots, the flour of which, packed in baskets and
[439] large palm leaves ..., they have been selling to the boatmen of the Tapajós ever since they established peaceful contact." (4)

4. Martius, 1867: 390: "In den Kuensten des Landbaus scheinen die Mundurukú nur insoweit Andern voranzustehen, als die Macht des zahlreichen und kriegerischen Stammes ... den Pflanzungen mehr Sicherheit verleiht, und die etwas gedraengtere Bevoelkerung nicht mehr bloss von Jagd und Fischerei abhaengig seyn kann. Sie bauen